



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: November 21, 2006

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF REVIEW TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SAFETY
Recommendations From School Safety Review Seek To Further Protect Students, Teachers

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today results of his statewide school safety review. On Oct. 9, Easley asked Secretary Bryan Beatty of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and Attorney General Roy Cooper to coordinate a comprehensive review of North Carolina's school safety programs and offer proposals to enhance school security.

"School administrators, law enforcement officials and emergency responders are working closely together in most parts of the state on school safety issues but there are always areas where we can improve," said Easley. "This review has given us a clearer picture of what we are doing well and what we need to work on to keep North Carolina's schools safe and secure places for our children to learn. Every parent in North Carolina should know that when they drop their child off in the morning that the state and the schools are doing everything possible to ensure their children's safety."

North Carolina's national leadership in the School Resource Officer Program, according to the report, is one of the key efforts that is working to help keep our schools secure. These certified law enforcement officers are permanently assigned to schools providing security, law-related counseling and public-safety related instruction.

The effectiveness of this program was evident in August when a gunman opened fire at Orange High School in Hillsborough. The immediate response of the school resource officer and a former state trooper on campus, who apprehended the gunman, prevented a more serious incident.

The review recommends expanding the program in high schools and middle schools so there is at least one resource officer for every 1,000 students. There are currently 773 resource officers in the state's public schools. The recommendation would add 24 resource officers statewide.

"We expect schools to both protect our children and prepare them for success," said Cooper. "Putting more officers in schools and ramping up training for teachers and law enforcement are key steps toward keeping our kids safe. It is critical that we do all we can now to help our schools be ready to respond to a wide range of threats so that we never have to wish we had done more."

The review found that some schools lack basic two-way communications between classrooms and the main office or do not have ways to immediately communicate crisis information to parents. The review recommends law enforcement, technology and school experts convene to examine the need and effectiveness of current technology and to develop recommendations for school districts to acquire the appropriate technology to ensure two-way communication in their schools.